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SUBJECT: BSEC: ROMANIAN CHAIRMANSHIP'S VISION OF COOPERATION WITH U.S.

REF: A. ANKARA 2031

- [1](#)B. ISTANBUL 645
- [1](#)C. ISTANBUL 470
- [1](#)D. STATE 43828

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Executive Manager Stefana Greavu and Project Coordinator Konstantinos Zaimis reviewed possible areas of cooperation with the U.S. in separate meetings with us on December 8. Greavu outlined Romania's priorities for its Chairmanship-in-office, together with a number of particular topics it views as appropriate for cooperation with the U.S., including security, regional energy, trade and transport, emergency assistance and good governance issues. Noting that Romania's six-month term will expire in April, she stressed that Romania has effectively utilized the "troika approach" to ensure project continuity under the subsequent Russian chairmanship. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Greavu, a Romanian national, had just returned from consultations in Bucharest to review Romania's plans for its six-month BSEC Chairmanship. She noted that her consultations had been curtailed because the Ministry was focused on Secretary Rice's visit to Romania, which occurred at the same time, but that Ministry officials had shared with her the text of an aide memoire prepared by the Romanian MFA, which outlined Romania's priorities, together with areas where it believes BSEC and the U.S. can cooperate fruitfully. She in turn shared that document with us. The priorities identified by Romania include: developing a partnership relation between BSEC and the EU, launching a reflection process on BSEC's future, consolidating the security and stability dimension within BSEC, consolidating democratic processes and economic reforms in Eastern European and Caucasian countries, pursuing various development projects and developing trade exchanges among Black Sea states, and enhancing BSEC collaboration with other regional organizations.

[1](#)3. (SBU) In the paper, Romania identified six possible fields of "cooperation of mutual interest" with the U.S. In response to our question about how these areas might be impacted by the transfer of BSEC's chair to Russia in April, she stressed that the country has for the first time effectively implemented the organization's "Troika" principle (grouping present, past, and future chairs), offering hope that there will be continuity between the Romanian chairmanship and the April-October Russian chairmanship. She noted that areas suggested by Romania for cooperation with the U.S. include:

-- Security issues, namely "soft security measures" for combatting crime, including particularly acts of terrorism, narcotics trafficking, arms trafficking, money laundering and other economic fraud, smuggling, illegal migration and human trafficking, counterfeiting, corruption, ecological crime, high-tech crime and maritime crime. The paper suggests enhancing cooperation with the Bucharest SECI Center for Combating Trans-border Crime (which Greavu noted had sparked some concern in U.S. circles in the past), with a medium term goal of building a "fusion center" to counter illicit activities in the Black Sea Region.

-- Regional Energy market, energy transportation, and energy security (through relevant working groups and the BSEC Business Council). Concrete measures include a possible international conference on the energy issue, with the participation of local Amchams, with the goal of establishing a "regulatory forum" for the energy market in the Black Sea area, as well as U.S. support for a "Bucharest Regional Energy Stock Exchange."

-- Trade and Transportation facilitation (through relevant working groups as well as the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank). Suggested measures include financing of projects on alternative transport routes, USAID organization of seminars on relevant topics, and support for a follow-on "Trade and Transport Facilitation in Southeast Europe (TTFSE) conference.

-- Environmental Protection (through the environmental working group). Possible common seminar with Turkish participation on ways to prevent oil pollution from

transiting tankers, and organization of a meeting of U.S. and BSEC experts on environmental issues. (The paper notes that UNDP is financing USD 6 million in environmental projects for representatives of the Black Sea Convention.)

-- Good governance and education (including student exchange, training, human resources), through a working group that will soon be formed and through the International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS). Suggestions include a scholarship fund financed by the U.S. for students interested in studying in the oil and gas fields, and involvement of CSIS- Euro Atlantic Action Commission in the organization of seminars and conferences.

-- Emergency Assistance (through working group). Romania suggests exploring organizing training or mini-conferences on better cooperation and inter-operability of civil assistance services, and providing assistance through exploratory missions and logistic support to combat avian flu.

14. (SBU) In a separate session, Konstantinos Zaimis, BSEC's project coordinator, outlined for us the organization's newly started project fund, which provides "seed money" to useful projects that have the support of at least three BSEC members. The fund provides small grants of USD 15,000 to these projects, but the organization is interested in working with other donors to multiply the benefits of the projects. He noted that the first three projects that the fund has supported will soon be completed; other new ideas are currently in the pipeline.

15. (SBU) Comment: Many of Romania's suggestions would require the commitment of significant U.S. resources, something the U.S. made clear was not on the horizon in the specific context of its BSEC observership request. To the extent, however, that BSEC's priorities tie in with the priorities of already existing U.S. programs and activities, Romania's suggestions may be worth exploring. Post understands, for instance, that USAID representatives will take part in next week's BSEC conference on electricity transmission networks. End Comment.
JONES